

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method of provisioning and reimbursement for medical equipment and services, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 generating a plan formulary in accordance with attributes of a health care payor;
  - 10 subscribing one or more medical entities to process a patient order of a patient in accordance with said plan formulary, which said patient order comprises select ones of the medical equipment and services; and
  - 15 communicating order information of said patient order to said one or more medical entities via a communication network to facilitate processing of said patient order.
- 15 2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said communication network in the step of communicating is a global communication packet-switched network.
- 20 3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said global communication packet-switched network is the Internet.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said communication network in the step of communicating is a circuit-switched network.
- 25 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said plan formulary of said health care payor in the step of generating contains eligibility files which define eligibility of said select ones of the medical equipment and services of said patient order which are to be provided to said patient.
- 30 6. The method of Claim 1, wherein a case manager reviews said eligibility of said select ones of the medical equipment and services of said patient order which are to be provided to said patient when predetermined criteria are met.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein said one or more medical entities process said patient order, in the step of subscribing, by a first delivery mode which delivers said select ones of the medical equipment and services directly to said patient, and a second delivery mode which delivers said select ones of the medical equipment and services first to a local provider, which said local provider then delivers said select ones of the medical equipment and services to said patient.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein each of the medical equipment and services are associated with either said first delivery mode or second delivery mode in accordance with associated delivery information contained in said plan formulary.

9. The method of Claim 7, wherein said first delivery mode is associated with a distribution/logistics partner entity of said one or more medical entities in the step of subscribing which provides distribution logistics for delivery of said select ones of the medical equipment and services to said patient and said local provider.

10. The method of Claim 7, wherein said second delivery mode is associated with a provider network manager entity of said one or more medical entities in the step of subscribing, which said provider network manager entity provides selection of an appropriate local provider for delivery thereto of said select ones of the medical equipment and services ordered by said patient.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein a system business center disposed on said communication network electronically places said patient order in response to receiving patient information from a local provider, said patient order placed electronically, in the step of communicating, to a manufacturer entity of said one or more medical entities disposed on said communication network, which said manufacturer entity manufactures medical equipment.

30 12. The method of Claim 11, wherein said communication network is a global communication packet-switched network such that said a system business center performs an e-commerce transaction when placing said patient order to said manufacturing entity.

13. The method of Claim 10, wherein said provider network manager receives said patient order via an electronic mail message transmitted over said communication network which is the Internet.

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14. The method of Claim 1, wherein said order information in the step of communicating is communicated to said one or more medical entities from a system business center disposed on said communication network.

10 15. The method of Claim 14, wherein said system business center stores said order information of said patient order and all costs associated therewith.

15 16. The method of Claim 15, wherein said costs are submitted to said health care payor via said communication network in the step of communicating on a periodic basis for reimbursement to said one or more medical entities which provide said select ones of the medical equipment and services.

20 17. The method of Claim 16, wherein said communication network is the Internet.

18. The method of Claim 16, wherein said reimbursement is via said system business center.

25 19. The method of Claim 18, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of said one or more medical entities who is a local provider.

20. The method of Claim 18, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of said one or more medical entities who is a provider network manager.

30 21. The method of Claim 18, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of said one or more medical entities who is a medical equipment manufacturer.

22. The method of Claim 18, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of  
said one or more medical entities who is a distribution/logistics partner.

23. The method of Claim 1, wherein said order information of said patient  
5 order is accessible by said one or more medical entities via said communication network  
in the step of communicating.

24. A provisioning and reimbursement system for medical equipment and  
services, comprising:

10 a plan formulary generated in accordance with attributes of a health care  
payor;

one or more medical entities subscribed to process a patient order of a  
patient in accordance with said plan formulary, which said patient order comprises select  
ones of the medical equipment and services; and

15 order information of said patient order communicated to said one or more  
medical entities via a communication network to facilitate processing of said patient  
order.

20 25. The system of Claim 24, wherein said communication network is a global  
communication packet-switched network.

26. The system of Claim 25, wherein said global communication packet-  
switched network is the Internet.

25 27. The system of Claim 24, wherein said communication network is a circuit-  
switched network.

30 28. The system of Claim 24, wherein said plan formulary of said health care  
payor contains eligibility files which define eligibility of said select ones of the medical  
equipment and services of said patient order which are to be provided to said patient.

29. The system of Claim 24, wherein a case manager reviews said eligibility of said select ones of the medical equipment and services of said patient order which are to be provided to said patient when predetermined criteria are met.

5       30. The system of Claim 24, wherein said one or more medical entities process said patient order by a first delivery mode which delivers said select ones of the medical equipment and services directly to said patient, and a second delivery mode which delivers said select ones of the medical equipment and services first to a local provider, which said local provider then delivers said select ones of the medical  
10      equipment and services to said patient.

15      31. The system of Claim 30, wherein each of the medical equipment and services is associated with either said first delivery mode or second delivery mode in accordance with associated delivery information contained in said plan formulary.

20      32. The system of Claim 30, wherein said first delivery mode is associated with a distribution/logistics partner entity of said one or more medical entities which provides distribution logistics for delivery of said select ones of the medical equipment and services to said patient.

25      33. The system of Claim 30, wherein said second delivery mode is associated with a provider network manager entity of said one or more medical entities, which said provider network manager entity provides selection of an appropriate local provider for delivery thereto of said select ones of the medical equipment and services ordered by said patient.

30      34. The system of Claim 24, wherein a system business center disposed on said communication network electronically places said patient order in response to receiving patient information from a local provider, said patient order placed electronically to a manufacturer entity of said one or more medical entities disposed on said communication network, which said manufacturer entity manufactures medical equipment.

35. The system of Claim 34, wherein said communication network is a global communication packet-switched network such that said system business center performs an e-commerce transaction when placing said patient order to said manufacturing entity.

5 36. The system of Claim 33, wherein said provider network manager receives said patient order via an electronic mail message transmitted over said communication network which is the Internet.

10 37. The system of Claim 24, wherein said order information is communicated to said one or more medical entities from a system business center disposed on said communication network.

15 38. The system of Claim 37, wherein said system business center stores said order information of said patient order and all costs associated therewith.

39. The system of Claim 38, wherein said costs are submitted to said health care payor via said communication network on a periodic basis for reimbursement to said one or more medical entities which provide said select ones of the medical equipment and services.

20 40. The system of Claim 39, wherein said communication network is the Internet.

25 41. The system of Claim 39, wherein said reimbursement is via said system business center.

42. The system of Claim 41, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of said one or more medical entities who is a local provider.

30 43. The system of Claim 41, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of said one or more medical entities who is a provider network manager.

44. The system of Claim 41, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of said one or more medical entities who is a medical equipment manufacturer.

45. The system of Claim 41, wherein said reimbursement is to a select one of  
5 said one or more medical entities who is a distribution logistics partner.

46. The system of Claim 24, wherein said order information of said patient order is accessible by said one or more medical entities via said communication network.

10 47. A method of medical equipment provisioning and reimbursement, comprising the steps of:

providing for interface and interaction with a payor to establish a plan formulary;

15 providing a data connection to a pre-selected plan;

establishing, via a pre-selected protocol, a connection to a payor-eligibility file to establish front-end eligibility;

communicating an order interface to allow for differentiation as to which items/products/services are direct to a consumer and which require a local provider;

20 directing an order, as it is placed, to an associated distribution/logistics partner;

receiving an electronic order that has been pre-authorized for patient eligibility and claims eligibility;

directing a received order to an associated case manager selected from an associated electronic catalogue;

25 rerouting a selected case manager back into the system to an associated distribution partner pre-selected in accordance with a specified plan formulary;

acknowledging an order to an associated local provider; and

accepting an order via said local provider that suitably selects from the routing an ordered item to a selected delivery site.

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48. The method of Claim 47, further comprising the step of periodically providing a super bill to said payor.

49. The method of Claim 47, further comprising the step of selectively providing real-time access of selected historical and active information relating to the order through a linking database.

5        50. A method of medical equipment provisioning and reimbursement, comprising the steps of:

developing a plan formulary according to requirements of a payor; interfacing said plan formulary with eligibility files of said payor via a global communication network to establish eligibility of products and services of a

10 patient in accordance with said requirements of said plan formulary;

receiving a patient order of products and/or services via said global communication network;

determining eligibility of said patient and said patient order in accordance with said eligibility files and said requirements of said plan formulary;

15 ordering said patient order of product and/or services via a system business center disposed on said global communication network;

delivering said patient order to said patient via a local provider for a local provider fee; and

20 reimbursing said local provider fee to said local provider from said system business center in response to said system business center obtaining reimbursement of said local provider fee from said payor.